

## Sample Slab Update #27 – August 2018

The newsletter for sample slab collectors

### Sample Slabs at the 2018 ANA World's Fair of Money

More new samples typically appear at the annual American Numismatic Association summer convention than at any other show. Highlights for collectors of samples and other holders included:



- The most anticipated holder at any World's Fair of Money goes to attendees of the PCGS Set Registry Luncheon. PCGS limited the slabs to 100 instead of the usual 120 to 180. Each held a circulated Franklin half dollar, honoring Philadelphia as the home of Franklin and the Liberty Bell. Known dates are 1961, 1962, 1962-D, and 1963. The one eBay sale so far, within hours of the luncheon, earned \$125. They should keep an above average value because of the smaller distribution and the older coin. I do not collect luncheon slabs in general, but I do keep holders from luncheons I attend. Thank you to PCGS for the invitation.
- Treasure Trivia participants earned the NGC Presidential dollar also seen at other shows.



- None of the third-party graders in attendance (ANACS, NGC, PCGS, PCGS Currency, and PMG) gave samples to the general public. ANACS, however, gave away samples in a drawing, including one five-ounce hockey puck. They displayed around 25 slabs with show labels and a variety of recent US



coins. Because the “SAMPLE – NOT FOR RESALE” wording was on the back, I did not realize they were samples until one appeared on eBay.



- NGC provided holders with Bicentennial quarters to attendees at a show kickoff event at the Museum of the American Revolution on Tuesday, August 14.

- The Numismatic Crime Information Center (NCIC) provided NGC holders with Jackson dollars at their law enforcement seminar.



- I met a dealer ([Staten Island Coin Investors](#)) who was assembling a set of 1922 dollars in every

generation of PCGS holders. It's always good to talk with a fellow plastic enthusiast.

- [Coin Rarities Online](#) is known for handling rare slabs and they had some impressive examples in their case.
  - An NGC black, possibly the most desirable third-party grading holder, with a 1908 nickel in PF 64.
  - A 10th Anniversary five-coin gold and silver Eagle set, including the famous 1995-W Silver Eagle, in matching PR69 PCGS Regency holders.

- Prominent slab collector Tim Larson showed me a PCGS internal prototype he obtained from a dealer at the ANA show. A demonstration of a planned special label, the unique holder had “Sample” handwritten on the back.



## Market Notes

See [the prior issue](#) for the beginning of the largest sample slab sale ever seen, by an eBay seller known only as muddonk. The sale continues, and as of this writing (August 20), muddonk sold 196 holders totaling \$19,532. Highlights include:

- Girl Scout (\$152) and previously unknown Boy Scout (\$129) YN slabs, each holding both a coin and a stamp.
- An early (January 5, 2007) PCGS luncheon slab with a Silver Eagle (\$175).
- NGC Mercury dime sample (\$270) – add photo.
- Proof-65 PCGS 1964 quarter (\$320).
- A collection of 10 ICG casino chip samples. Although not valuable (\$30 each), all ICG chip samples are rare, and Muddonk sold more than all previous eBay sellers combined. The offerings included a previously unknown Excalibur chip.



A few slabs remain at [muddonk's eBay store](#), mostly rare ICG holders.

Although our niche market is thin, collectors absorbed this influx of material without a drop in volume or prices in the rest of the market. When popular holders such as PCGS doilies or NGC Peace dollars appeared, they held their recent values.



## PCGS Rattler Samples – Analysis of Scarcity and Pricing

Collectors can get quite deep into small variations in their favorite objects. That's the way people like us think. To help with this pursuit, I detailed the label numbers and coin dates for 275 PCGS rattlers sold on eBay in the chart below. All coins were Roosevelt dimes. Some coins were proofs, but I did not separate proof and business strike coins.

PCGS rattler sample slabs

Based on eBay sales 3/1/15 through 8/4/18

Each column shows the number of slabs sold, followed by the average price

Number	1957	1958	1958-D	1959	1960	1960-D	1961	1961-D	1962	1962-D	1963	1963-D	1964	1964-D	Total
00000.00/0000000	1 \$462			3 \$200	1 \$305		9 \$199				7 \$157		2 \$98	20 \$138	43 \$168
05114.64/7000023	2 \$71														2 \$71
05120.64/7000023					12 \$28	15 \$22	6 \$27	7 \$23	4 \$38	1 \$24	6 \$19	9 \$20	15 \$20		75 \$23
05122.64/7000023							5 \$27		1 \$108						6 \$41
05123.64/7000023								2 \$29							2 \$29
05124.64/7000023												1 \$24			1 \$24
05125.64/7000023								1 \$27	9 \$18						10 \$20
05126.64/7000023										19 \$23					19 \$23
05127.64/7000023												24 \$21	1 \$17	2 \$9	27 \$20
05128.64/7000023					1 \$21		1 \$15	2 \$20					14 \$22		18 \$21
05129.64/7000023										4 \$22		2 \$16	2 \$29	60 \$21	68 \$21
05177.64/7000023			1 \$76												1 \$76
05233.64/7000023		2 \$67													2 \$67
06702.64/7000023							1 \$10								1 \$10
Total	3 \$201	2 \$67	1 \$76	3 \$200	14 \$49	15 \$22	22 \$93	11 \$24	6 \$48	14 \$20	32 \$52	36 \$21	34 \$26	82 \$49	275 \$45

The first five digits are often the PCGS coin number for the enclosed coin and date. See the PCGS price guide for coin numbers for US coins. In the case of samples, the coin and coin number may vary. For example, 05129 is the coin number for a 1964-D dime. A sample labeled 05129.64/7000023 will hold a 1964-D dime, or possibly another Roosevelt of a similar date.

What are some takeaways from this data?

- The number 06702 stands out right away. Why was there only one sale of this number and why did it sell so low? Labeled PR64, this was the only sale of a rattler with a proof grade. Some solid-zero rattlers have proof coins, but there have no grades on the labels. It sold quickly as a Buy It Now to a fortunate new collector for just \$9.99. This slab would earn more in an auction.
- Some dates do not exist, or at least did not appear for sale in the scope period: 1957-D and 1959-D.
- Average prices for some dates, and for the data set as a whole, are skewed upwards by the desirable solid-zero holders. Removing the 00000.00/0000000 pieces, the average price of a PCGS rattler sample drops from \$45 to \$23.
- Undiscovered numbers and dates surely exist. New discoveries appear in this emerging field all the time. For example, the data shows 15 1960-D coins, but no holders with the coin number for a 1960-D dime, which is 05121.
- All 1950s dates are scarce.

- It will surprise no-one that 1964-D is the most common date. The most common numbers are 05129 (the coin number for a 1964-D dime), and 05120 (the coin number for a 1960 dime).
- Some scarce numbers, such as 05124, could hide in plain sight among a sea of common holders.

### New Sample Slab Issuer – United States Numismatic Arts Foundation (USNAF)



I am always happy to learn of a previously unknown sample slab issuer. We usually know little about obscure graders, but this one is more mysterious than most. Instead of adding to the speculation, let me list the facts that I know.

1. A USNAF slab labeled SAMPLE [auctioned on eBay 7/28/18 for \\$280.99](#). The coin is a 1961 proof quarter.
2. A USNAF production slab with a 1923 dollar [sold on eBay 7/31/18](#). The price is not clear. The listing shows \$99, while the list of this seller's sold items shows \$250.
3. The seller, eBay ID lsco-0, is in Arlington, Texas and joined eBay 6/22/18.
4. Two previous eBay auctions for USNAF holders ended without sales and disappeared from eBay. I do not know if eBay or the seller removed the listings.
5. A listing for a bundle of a USNAF sample slab and a mislabeled NGC production slab (1940-S quarter labeled 1940-D) started on 8/5/18. The seller pointed out the listing to me, then let me know that eBay cancelled the listing.
6. Another listing for a USNAF sample started about 8/7/18 and again disappeared. The first photo in the listing was a man silhouetted against a window so his features could not be seen. The listing also included photos of the holder.

7. The seller describes the rarity of the holders in his listings but does not discuss USNAF, such as the company's origin or other details. He kindly gave me permission to use a photo but did not answer when I asked about the history of the issuer.
8. The holder is a Capitol Plastics-style screw-down rectangular holder sealed with embossed gold stickers.
9. A lengthy discussion on [Coin Community Forum beginning 7/31/18](#) includes accusations that the holders are fakes, defense by the seller, and a reference to USNAF in a 1987 newspaper ad.
10. A discussion on [Coin Community Forum beginning 1/5/16](#) mentions USNAF and gives a 1986 copyright citation.
11. USNAF has [a Facebook page](#).
12. In a discussion on the [NGC forum beginning 12/2/15](#), slab authority Conder101 writes that he had never seen one before.
13. Top slab dealer Mike Kittle [lists a USNAF production slab](#) in his sales archive.
14. All holders are dated 1987.
15. A Sample Slab Update reader told me that the seller told him that the seller has about 40 slabs to sell.
16. The address on the label is 3941 B S Bristol Ave, Suite 316, Santa Ana, CA 92704. Today 3941 S Bristol St, Santa Ana is a small shopping center. There is no longer a 3941 B or suite numbers. The building at 3941 S Bristol St appears to be newer than 1987, suggesting that the Suite 316 address no longer exists.

### New Sample Slab Issuer – Unigrade



Unigrade is yet another sample slab issuer not listed in the Sample Slabs book, [sampleslabs.com](http://sampleslabs.com), or in the Conder101 reference. This holder secures the coin in a cardboard 2x2 inside of a heat-sealed soft flip, similar to International Coin Certification Service (ICCS), another Canadian grader. ICCS did not make a known sample.

According to their website, [unigradecoins.com](http://unigradecoins.com), this service is based in Boucherville, Quebec. The business is described as a sales and purchase counter inside a Carrefour (a department store). This recalls the coin counters formerly located inside large department stores in many American cities. The 2013 website describes the grading service as new, suggesting it started around that year. An eBay search finds three Unigrade production holders, all with Canadian coins. They offer soft holders like the sample pictured, hard plastic slabs, and currency holders. The website explains that customers must drop off and pickup their coins in person, helping to explain why Unigrade holders seldom appear in the market.

## **Book News**

About 6 copies of the Sample Slabs, second edition book remain out of the print run of 150. I took the book off eBay to avoid selling out. I probably will not print more, as it would take years to sell the minimum order of 100 more copies. Fortunately, an unlimited supply of PDFs remains. Although most readers prefer the printed book, I use the PDF for easy searching. Buy the printed book for \$29 with shipping (\$12 for the PDF download) at [SampleSlabBook.com](http://SampleSlabBook.com).

## **Buying and Selling**

### **Buying**

I always buy sample collections or better single slabs for inventory. For my own collection, I look for samples from obscure or unlisted grading services, gold coin samples, and rarities from all services. [davidschwager@hotmail.com](mailto:davidschwager@hotmail.com)

### **Selling**

Thank you to everyone who bought from Sample Slab Update Sale #7 in July. Not surprisingly, the valuable and scarce slabs sold first, most within the first day of the sale. Several items, especially the more affordable samples, [remain for sale](#).

Isaiah Hageman completed his sample slab book, The Sample Slab, 2nd edition. To purchase, email Isaiah at [isaiah1215@gmail.com](mailto:isaiah1215@gmail.com) or see [his eBay listings](#). He makes this offer to Sample Slab Update readers: "Make a best offer (on eBay) of \$6.50 (plus \$3.50 shipping for a total of \$10.00.) and I will accept. Free shipping on orders of 3 or more books, in that case shipping will be refunded to PayPal address used to purchase."

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